

LIVING ARRANGEMENTS OF CHILDREN IN 2002

Health care professionals, school planners, and child care providers look to U.S. Census Bureau numbers on children to decide if new facilities or services are needed. Census Bureau data on children's living arrangements help researchers understand how different types of family situations contribute to a child's well-being. Information on the living arrangements of children is collected in the Annual Social and Economic Supplement (ASEC) to the Current Population Survey (CPS).

In 2002, 72 million children under age 18 lived in the United States—representing 26 percent of the country's civilian noninstitutionalized population.¹ In recent decades, the percentage of children living with both parents has dropped, while the percentage living with a single parent increased (Figure 1). In 2002, 69 percent of children lived with two parents, while 23 percent lived with only their mother and 5 percent lived with only their father. Four percent of children lived without either parent.

Adults in the Household

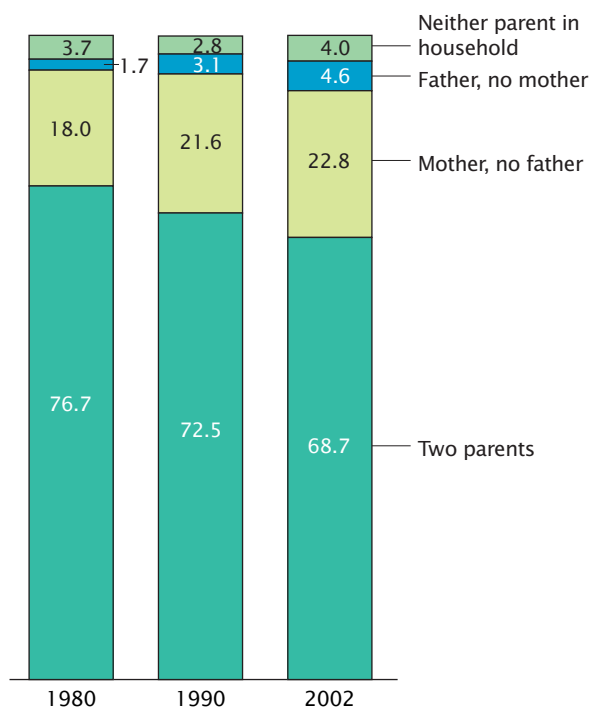
In 2002, 11 percent of children under 15 living with their single mother and 33 percent of those living with their single father were in households that included the parent's unmarried partner. When children lived without either parent, at least one grandparent was frequently in the household—44 percent of the time.

In 2002, 8 percent of all children under 18 lived in households where at least one grandparent was present. Among children under 6, 10 percent lived in a household with a grandparent, compared with 7 percent of those 6 to 11, and 6 percent of those 12 to 17. The majority of children living with grandparents were in households where the grandparent was the householder. Sixty-five percent of these children had the benefit of at least one parent in their home.

¹ The estimates in this report (which may be shown in text, figures, and tables) are based on responses from a sample of the population and may differ from actual values because of sampling variability or other factors. As a result, apparent differences between the estimates for two or more groups may not be statistically significant. All comparative statements have undergone statistical testing and are significant at the 90-percent confidence level unless otherwise noted. For more information on the accuracy of the data, see Appendix A.

Figure 1.
**Living Arrangements of Children:
1980, 1990, and 2002**

(Percent distribution of children under age 18)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 1980, 1990, and 2002.

Words That Count

Children are all people under age 18, excluding those who maintain households, families, or sub-families as a householder or spouse.

Parents are not limited to biological parents but include stepparents and those who adopt their children. Foster parents are considered nonrelatives.

Single parents, for the purpose of this report, include people who may be married but not living with their spouse, as well as other divorced, widowed, or never-married people.

Parents in the Household²

In 2002, more than half of Black children lived with a single parent—48 percent with a single mother and 5 percent with a single father. The percentages for non-Hispanic Whites were 16 percent and 4 percent, respectively, while those for Asians and Pacific Islanders were 13 percent and 2 percent, respectively. Among Hispanic children, 25 percent lived with a single mother and 5 percent with a single father.³

² Because Hispanics may be any race, data for Hispanics overlap slightly with data for Black and Asian and Pacific Islander populations. Based on the 2002 CPS ASEC, 4 percent of Black children and 3 percent of Asian and Pacific Islander children were also Hispanic. Data for American Indian and Alaska Native children are not shown in this section because of the small sample size in the 2002 CPS ASEC.

³ The percentage of Hispanic children living with their father only (5 percent) was not statistically different from the percentage of Black children (5 percent) or non-Hispanic White children (4 percent) living with their father only.

Black children were more likely than children in the other groups to live in a grandparent's household. While 9 percent of Black children lived with a grandparent in 2002, the rate was 4 percent for non-Hispanic White children and 3 percent for Asian and Pacific Islander children. Six percent of Hispanic children lived in a grandparent's home.

Fifteen percent of children in two-parent families lived in households where the 2001 household income was below \$30,000.⁴ In contrast, 45 percent with a single father, 65 percent with a single mother, and 61 percent without either parent were in households with incomes this low.

⁴ Income data are for the year prior to the survey. For information on household income by family type, see the chapter on money income, and for information on children and adults in poverty by household type, see the chapter on poverty.

Child Care Arrangements (Spring 1997)

Data from the Survey of Income and Program Participation (SIPP) describe and contrast care arrangements for preschool- and grade-school-age children in 1997.⁵

Child Care for Preschoolers

In 1997, 63 percent of children under 5 years of age were in some form of regular child care during a typical week.⁶ These preschoolers were more likely to be cared for by a relative (41 percent) than a nonrelative (35 percent) and 12 percent received care from both. Twenty-one percent of preschoolers were cared for by their grandparents and 17 percent by their fathers.⁷ Four percent were cared for by other siblings or their mother while she worked. Other relatives cared for another 9 percent of children in this age group. About one-fifth of preschoolers were in organized facilities, 6 percent were in nursery or preschools, and 12 percent were in day care centers.

⁵ The data come from the fourth interview of the 1996 SIPP panel conducted between April and July 1997 and refer to child care arrangements used in the month prior to the interview.

⁶ Since some children are in more than one type of arrangement, the total number of arrangements exceeds the actual number of children.

⁷ Information on child care by the mother or father was collected only for the time when the designated parent was working or attending school.

Child Care for Older Children

Relatives are important contributors to the care of children 5 to 14 years old. In 1997, 17 percent were cared for by siblings, 16 percent by their fathers, and 15 percent by grandparents. Four percent of children received care from nonrelatives in their own home and another 7 percent in the provider's home. Six percent were in organized facilities. Most children in this age group were in school (84 percent) and some (17 percent) participated in enrichment activities such as sports, lessons, clubs, and before- or after-school programs. In addition, 19 percent of grade-school age children cared for themselves on a regular basis without any adult supervision.

The Cost of Child Care

Of the 32.6 million mothers who lived

with at least one child under age 15 in 1997, 33 percent reported they made cash payments for child care—with payments averaging \$71 per week. Mothers who were not employed were less likely than those who were employed to pay for child care, 14 percent compared with 43 percent. They also paid less for care than employed mothers, \$49 per week compared with \$75 per week. On average, mothers with one child paid \$61 per week, while those with two or more children paid \$86 per week. Payments were also higher for women with higher household incomes (Figure 2).

Figure 2.
**Weekly Child Care Payments by
Monthly Family Income: 1997**



Note: Average expenditures per week among people making child care payments.
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Panel, Wave 4.

A Child's Day (2000)

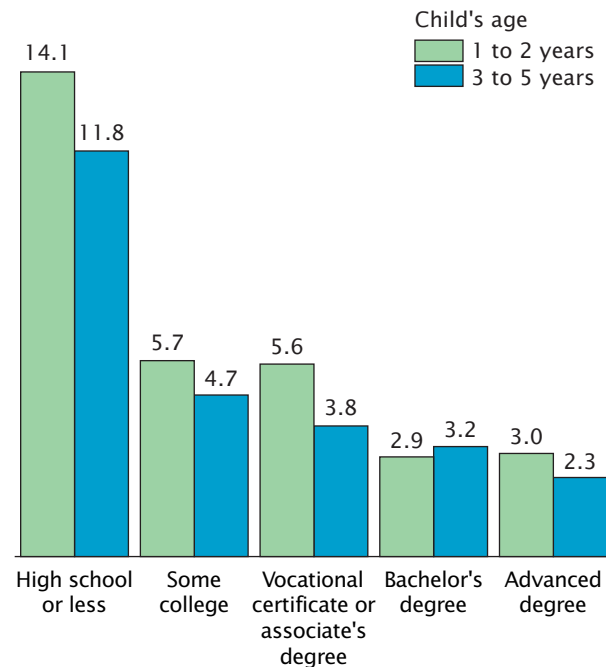
Data from the SIPP describe a variety of children's experiences both at home and at school.⁸ The SIPP provides information on children living away from home, families eating meals together, television rules for children, reading to children, outings in the last month, and extracurricular activities, including sports, clubs, and lessons.

Interaction With Parents⁹

In 2000, about three-fourths of young children ate dinner with at least one parent each day. Among older children, who had more activities both before and after school, two-thirds shared dinner with a parent every day. In both cases, children of married parents were more likely than

children of unmarried parents to have dinner with at least one parent.

Figure 3.
Children Never Read to by Any Family Member by Parent's Educational Attainment and Child's Age: 2000
(In percent)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Survey of Income and Program Participation, 1996 Panel, Wave 12.

Fathers had less frequent interaction with their children than did their spouses or unmarried partners. For example, 55 percent of children under 6 in married-couple families ate breakfast with their mother every day, while 24 percent ate breakfast with their father that often. The meal-time experiences were similar for children living with married and unmarried parents.

Reading to Children

Children living with a never-married parent, with parents who had a high school diploma or less education, or in families in poverty faced a greater likelihood of never being read to than other children. Figure 3 illustrates the relationship

between the educational attainment of parents and reading to children. Half of all children aged 1 to 5 were read to by a family member seven or more times a week and 8 percent were never read to by any family member in the week preceding the SIPP.

⁸ The data in this section were taken from the SIPP, 1996 Panel, Wave 12.

⁹ In this section, the term "parent" refers to the designated parent, defined as the biological, step, or adoptive parent, or some other person acting as the child's guardian, who was the respondent to this portion of the SIPP questionnaire. In married-couple families, the mother was usually the designated parent. In single-parent families, the parent living with the child was the designated parent. When neither parent was in the household, a guardian was the designated parent.

Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support (1999)

In 2000, an estimated 13.5 million parents had custody of 21.7 million children under age 21 whose other parent lived somewhere else, according to the April 2000 supplement to the CPS. Of all custodial parents, 85 percent were mothers. Overall, 26 percent of children in families had a parent who did not live with them.

Custodial Parents and Poverty Levels

Between 1993 and 1999, the proportion of custodial parents and their children living in poverty fell from 33 percent to 26 percent. The 1999 rate was still approximately 2.5 times higher for households headed by custodial mothers (29 percent) than those headed by custodial fathers (11 percent), (Figure 4). The rate for both was higher than the rate for married-couple households (6.3 percent).

Between 1993 and 1999, the proportion of custodial parents employed full-time, year-round increased

from 46 percent to 54 percent. At the same time, dependence on public assistance decreased, from

41 percent to 30 percent. Participation rates were about four times as high for custodial mothers (34 percent) as for custodial fathers (9 percent).

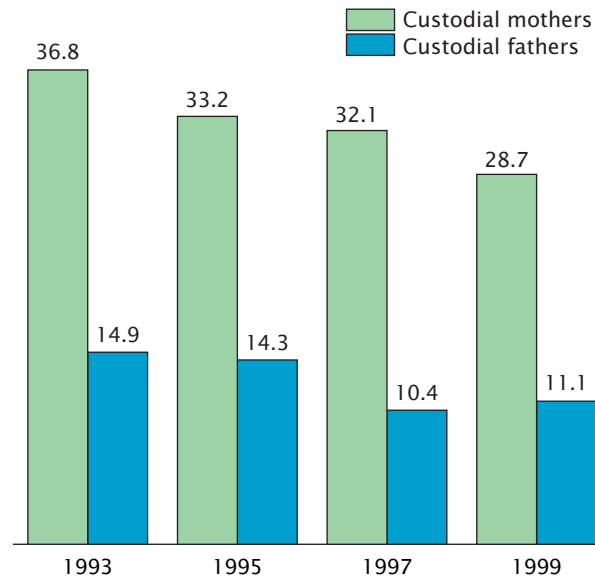
Custodial Parents and Child Support

In 2000, 59 percent of custodial parents had child support agreements. Custodial mothers were more likely than custodial fathers to have child support awards: 62 percent, compared with 39 percent. About three-quarters of custodial parents with awards received at least some of their annual child support payments. Forty-five percent received all payments,

while 29 percent received some payments but not the full amount. Among those who received support, the average amount received in 1999 was \$3,800 for mothers and \$3,200 for fathers.

Figure 4.

Percentage of Custodial Mothers and Fathers Living in Poverty: 1993 to 1999



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, April 1994, 1996, 1998, and 2000.

The Census Bureau Can Tell You More

For more detailed information, consult the following U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Reports: *Children's Living Arrangements and Characteristics: March 2002* (P20-547) by Jason Fields; *Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 1997* (P70-86) by Kristin Smith; *A Child's Day: 2000 (Selected Indicators of Child Well-Being)* (P70-89) by Terry A. Lugaila; and *Custodial Mothers and Fathers and Their Child Support: 1999* (P60-217) by Timothy Grall.

Look for complete reports and detailed tables on the Census Bureau's Web site <www.census.gov>. Click on "F" and select "Families and Living Arrangements," "H" and select "Households," or "C" and select "Children."

Contact the Census Bureau's Customer Service Center at 301-763-INFO (4636).

For information on the living arrangements of children, e-mail <pop@census.gov>.

For information on child support, e-mail <hhes-info@census.gov>.